

CHARACTERS

from

Hume, Smollett,

&c.

With the life of Hume .



PARIS .

Published

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1804 .

THE LIFE OF
DAVID HUME, Esq.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF,

INTITLED,

MY OWN LIFE.

IT is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity ; therefore I shall be short. It may be thought an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my life ; but this Narrative shall contain little more than the History of my Writings ; as , indeed , almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity.

I was born the 26th of April 1711 , old style , at Edinburgh. I was of a good family , both by father and mother : My father's family is a branch of the Earl of Home's , or Hume's ; and my ancestors had been proprietors of the estate , which my brother possesses, for several generations. My mother was daughter of Sir David Falconer , President of the College of Justice : The title of Lord Halkerton came by succession to her brother.

My family , however , was not rich , and being myself a younger brother , my patrimony , according to the mode of my country , was of course

very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments. My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an unsurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.

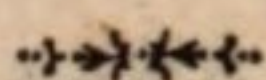
My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734 I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants; but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me. I went over to France with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country-retreat; and I there laid that plan of life which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to main-

tain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.

DURING my retreat in France, first at Rheims, but chiefly at la Fleche, in Anjou, I composed my *Treatise of Human Nature*. After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737. In the end of 1738, I published my *Treatise*, and immediately went down to my mother and brother, who lived at his country-house, and was employed himself very judiciously and successfully in the improvement of his fortune.

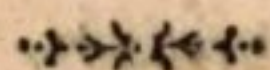
NEVER literary attempt was more unfortunate than my *Treatise of Human nature*. It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots. But being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I very soon recovered the blow, and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country. In 1742 I printed at Edinburgh the first part of my *Essays*: The work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.

In 1745 I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England; I found also, that the friends



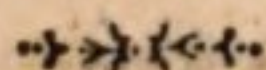
and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune. I then received an invitation from General St. Clair to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France. Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aid-de-camp to the General, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life: I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so: In short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.

I had always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the Treatise of Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I therefore cast the first part of that work anew in the Inquiry concerning Human



Understanding, which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the Treatise of Human Nature. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been published at London, of my Essays, moral and political, met not with a much better reception.

Such is the force of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country-house, for my mother was now dead. I there composed the second part of my Essay, which I called Political Discourses, and also my Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, which is another part of my Treatise that I cast anew. Meanwhile my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends and Right Reverends came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company. However, I had a fixed resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to any body; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself



clear of all literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favourable than unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.

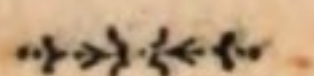
In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters: In 1752 were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my Political Discourses, the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received at home and abroad. In the same year was published at London, my Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals; which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world.

In 1752 the Faculty of Advocates chose me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the History of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the accession of the house of Stuart, an epoch when I thought the mis-representations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power,



interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, freethinker, and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

I was, however, I confess discouraged; and had not the war at that time been breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere.

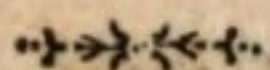


In this interval, I published at London my Natural History of Religion, along with some other small pieces: Its public entry was rather obscure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility, which distinguish the Warburtonian school. This pamphlet gave me some consolation for the otherwise indifferent reception of my performance.

In 1756, two years after the fall of the first volume, was published the second volume of my History, containing the period from the death of Charles I. till the revolution. This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother.

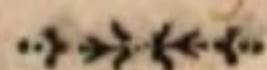
But though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or recollection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty.

In 1759 I published my History of the House of Tudor. The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two first Stuarts. The reign of Elisabeth was parti-



cularly obnoxious. But I was now callous against the impressions of public folly, and continued very peaceably and contentedly in my retreat at Edinburgh, to finish, in two volumes, the more early part of the English History, which I gave to the public in 1761, with tolerable, and but tolerable, success.

But notwithstanding this variety of winds and seasons to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances, that the copy-money given me by the booksellers much exceeded any thing formerly known in England; I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all the rest of my life in this philosophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an invitation from the earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the least acquainted, to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a near prospect of being appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at first declined, both because I was reluctant to begin connexions with the great, and because I was afraid that the civilities and gay company of Paris would prove disagreeable to a person of my age and humour: But



on his Lordship's repeating the invitation, I accepted it. I have every reason, both of pleasure and interest, to think myself happy in my connexions with that nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother General Conway.

Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I recoiled from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real satisfaction in living at Paris, from the great number of sensible, knowing, and polite company with which that city abounds above all places in the universe. I thought once of settling there for life.

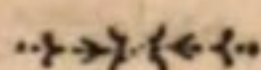
I was appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in the summer 1765, Lord Hertford left me, being appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I was *Chargé d'Affaires* till the arrival of the Duke of Richmond, towards the end of the year. In the beginning of 1766, I left Paris, and next summer went to Edinburgh, with the same view as formerly, of burying myself in a philosophical retreat. I returned to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means of Lord Hertford's friendship, than I left it, and I was desirous of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But 1767 I received from Mr. Conway an invitation to be Under-secretary; and this invitation, both the character



of the person, and my connexions with Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining. I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of 1000 l. a-year), healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation.

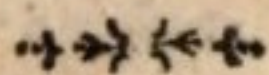
In the spring 1775 I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits; insomuch, that were I to name a period of my life which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this latter period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company. I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation breaking out at last with additional lustre, I knew that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the stile I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild disposition, of command of



temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men, anywise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked, by her baleful tooth; and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: Not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself; but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

April 13, 1776.

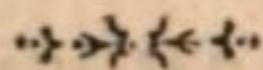


CHARACTER OF ALFRED THE GREAT,

KING OF ENGLAND.

BY HUME.

The merit of this prince, both in private and public life, may with advantage be set in opposition to that of any monarch or citizen which the annals of any age or nation can present us. He seems, indeed, to be the complete model of that perfect character, which, under the denomination of a sage or wise man, the philosophers have been fond of delineating, rather as a fiction of their imagination, than in hopes of ever seeing it reduced to practice: so happily were all his virtues tempered together, so justly were they blended, and so powerfully did each prevent the other from exceeding its proper bounds. He knew how to conciliate the most enterprising spirit with the coolest moderation; the most obstinate perseverance with the easiest flexibility; the most severe justice with the mildest lenity; the greatest rigour in command with the greatest affability of deportment; the highest capacity and inclination for science, with the most shining talents for action. His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration, excepting only, that the former being more rare among princes, as well as more useful, seem chiefly to challenge our applause. Nature also, as if desirous that so bright a production of

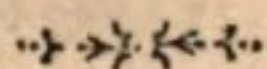


her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him all bodily accomplishments, vigour of limbs, dignity of shape and air, and a pleasant, engaging, and open countenance. Fortune alone, by throwing him into that barbarous age, deprived him of historians worthy to transmit his fame to posterity; and we wish to see him delineated in more lively colours, and with more particular strokes, that we may at least perceive some of those small specks and blemishes, from which, as a man, it is impossible he could be entirely exempted.

CHARACTER OF ALFRED.

BY SMOLLETT.

Alfred, that he might be the better able to extend his charity and munificence, regulated his finances with the most perfect economy, and divided his revenues into a certain number of parts, which he appropriated to the different expences of the state, and the exercise of his own private liberality and devotion; nor was he a less economist in the distribution of his time, which he divided into three equal portions, allotting one to sleep, meals, and exercise; and devoting the other two to writing, reading, business, and prayer. That this division might not be encroached upon inadvertently, he measured them by tapers of an equal size, which he kept continually burning before the shrines of relics. Alfred seemed to be a genius self-taught,

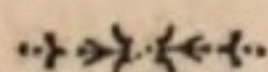


which contrived and comprehended every thing that could contribute to the security of his kingdom. He was author of that inestimable privilege, peculiar to the subjects of this nation, which consists in their being tried by their peers; for he first instituted juries, or at least improved upon an old institution, by specifying the number and qualifications of jurymen, and extending their power to trials of property as well as criminal indictments: but no regulation redounded more to his honour and the advantage of his kingdom, than the measures he took to prevent rapine, murder, and other outrages, which had so long been committed with impunity. His attention stooped even to the meanest circumstances of his people's conveniency. He introduced the art of brick-making, and built his own houses of those materials; which being much more durable and secure from accidents than timber, his example was followed by his subjects in general. He was, doubtless, an object of most perfect esteem and admiration; for, exclusive of the qualities which distinguished him as a warrior and a legislator, his personal character was amiable in every respect. He died 897, aged 52.

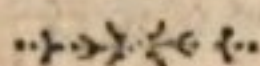
CHARACTER OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

BY HUME.

Few princes have been more fortunate than this great monarch, or were better entitled to pros-



perity and grandeur for the abilities and vigour of mind which he displayed in all his conduct. His spirit was bold and enterprising, yet guided by prudence. His ambition, which was exorbitant, and lay little under the restraints of justice, and still less under those of humanity, ever submitted to the dictates of reason and sound policy. Born in an age when the minds of men were intractable and unacquainted with submission, he was yet able to direct them to his purposes; and, partly from the ascendant of his vehement disposition, partly from art and dissimulation, to establish an unlimited monarchy. Though not insensible to generosity, he was hardened against compassion, and seemed equally ostentatious and ambitious of eclat in his clemency and his severity. The maxims of his administration were severe; but might have been useful, had they been solely employed in preserving order in an established government: they were ill calculated for softening the rigours which under the most gentle management are inseparable from conquest. His attempt against England was the last enterprise of the kind, which, during the course of seven hundred years, has fully succeeded in Europe; and the greatness of his genius broke through those limits, which first the feudal institutions, then the refined policy of princes, have fixed on the several states of Christendom. Though he rendered himself infinitely odious to his English subjects, he transmitted his power to his posterity, and the throne



is still filled by his descendants; a proof that the foundation which he laid was firm and solid, and that amongst all his violences, while he seemed only to gratify the present passion, he had still an eye towards futurity. He died September 9, 1087, aged 63.*

CHARACTER OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

BY SMOLLETT.

From the transactions of William's reign, he appears to have been a prince of great courage, capacity, and ambition; politic, cruel, vindictive, and rapacious; stern and haughty in his deportment, reserved and jealous in his disposition. He was fond of glory, and, though parsimonious in his household, delighted much in ostentation. Though sudden and impetuous in his enterprises, he was cool, deliberate, and indefatigable, in times of danger and difficulty. His aspect was nobly severe and imperious, his stature tall and portly; his constitution robust, and the composition of his bones and muscles strong; there was hardly a man of that age, who could bend his bow, or handle his arms.

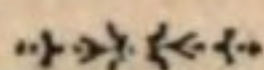
* Smollet says, 61.

CHARACTER OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

BY LYTTELTON.

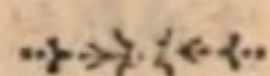
The character of this prince has seldom been set in its true light ; some eminent writers having been dazzled so much by the more shining parts of it, that they have hardly seen his faults ; while others, out of a strong detestation of tyranny , have been unwilling to allow him the praise he deserves.

He may with justice be ranked among the greatest generals any age has produced. There was united in him activity , vigilance , intrepidity , caution , great force of judgment, and never-failing presence of mind. He was strict in his discipline , and kept his soldiers in perfect obedience ; yet preserved their affection. Having been from his very childhood continually in war , and at the head of armies , he joined to all the capacity that genius could give , all the knowledge and skill that experience could teach , and was a perfect master of the military art, as it was practised in the times wherein he lived. His constitution enabled him to endure any hardships , and very few were equal to him in personal strength , which was an excellence of more importance than it is now , from the manner of fighting then in use. It is said of him, that none except himself could bend his bow. His courage was heroic , and he possessed it not only in the field, but (which is more uncommon) in the cabinet,



attempting great things with means that to other men appeared totally unequal to such undertakings, and steadily prosecuting what he had boldly resolved; being never disturbed or disheartened by difficulties, in the course of his enterprises; but having that noble vigour of mind, which, instead of bending to opposition, rises against it, and seems to have a power of controlling and commanding Fortune herself.

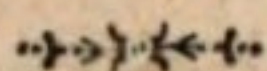
Nor was he less superior to pleasure than to fear: no luxury softened him, no riot disordered, no sloth relaxed. It helped not a little to maintain the high respect his subjects had for him, that the majesty of his character was never let down by any incontinence or indecent excess. His temperance and his chastity were constant guards, that secured his mind from all weakness, supported its dignity, and kept it always as it were on the throne. Through his whole life he had no partner of his bed but his queen; a most extraordinary virtue in one who had lived, even from his earliest youth, amidst all the licence of camps, the allurements of a court, and the seductions of sovereign power! Had he kept his oaths to his people as well as he did his marriage vow, he would have been the best of kings; but he indulged other passions of a worse nature, and infinitely more detrimental to the public than those he restrained. A lust of power, which no regard to justice could limit, the most unrelenting cruelty, and the most insatiable avarice, possessed his soul. It is true, indeed, that among many acts



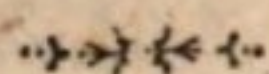
of extreme inhumanity, some shining instances of great clemency may be produced, that were either effects of his policy, which taught him this method of acquiring friends, or of his magnanimity, which made him slight a weak and subdued enemy, such as was Edgar Atheling, in whom he found neither spirit nor talents able to contend with him for the crown. But where he had no advantage nor pride in forgiving, his nature discovered itself to be utterly void of all sense of compassion; and some barbarities which he committed exceeded the bounds that even tyrants and conquerors prescribe to themselves.

Most of our ancient historians give him the character of a very religious prince; but his religion was after the fashion of those times, belief without examination, and devotion without piety. It was a religion that prompted him to endow monasteries, and at the same time allowed him to pillage kingdoms; that threw him on his knees before a relic or cross, but suffered him unrestrained to trample upon the liberties and rights of mankind.

As to his wisdom in government, of which some modern writers have spoken very highly, he was indeed so far wise that, through a long unquiet reign, he knew how to support oppression by terror, and employ the properest means for the carrying on a very iniquitous and violent administration. But that which alone deserves the name of wisdom in the character of a king, the maintaining of authority by the exercise of those virtues which



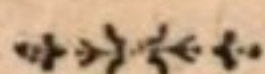
make the happiness of his people, was what, with all his abilities, he does not appear to have possessed. Nor did he excel in those soothing and popular arts, which sometimes change the complexion of a tyranny, and give it a fallacious appearance of freedom. His government was harsh and despotic, violating even the principles of that constitution which he himself had established. Yet so far he performed the duty of a sovereign, that he took care to maintain a good police in his realm; curbing licentiousness with a strong hand, which, in the tumultuous state of his government, was a great and difficult work. How well he performed it, we may learn even from the testimony of a contemporary Saxon historian, who says, that during his reign, a man might have travelled in perfect security all over the kingdom with his bosom full of gold, nor durst any kill another in revenge of the greatest offences, nor offer violence to the chastity of a woman. But it was a poor compensation, that the highways were safe, when the courts of justice were dens of thieves, and when almost every man in authority, or in office, used his power to oppress and pillage the people. The king himself did not only tolerate, but encourage, support, and even share their extortions. Though the greatness of the ancient landed estates of the crown, and the feudal profits to which he legally was entitled, rendered him one of the richest monarchs in Europe, he was not content with all that opulence, but by authorizing the sheriffs, who collected his revenues in the



several counties, to practise the most grievous vexations and abuses, for the raising of them higher, by a perpetual auction of the crown-lands, so that none of his tenants could be secure of possession, if any other would come and offer more. By various iniquities in the court of exchequer, which was entirely Norman; by forfeitures wrongfully taken, and, lastly, by arbitrary and illegal taxations, he drew into his treasury much too great a proportion of the wealth of his kingdom.

It must however be owned, that if his avarice was insatiably and unjustly rapacious, it was not meanly parsimonious, nor of that sordid kind which brings on a prince dishonour and contempt. He supported the dignity of his crown with a decent magnificence, and though he never was lavish, he sometimes was liberal, more especially to his soldiers and to the church. But looking on money as a necessary means of maintaining and increasing power, he desired to accumulate as much as he could, rather, perhaps, from an ambitious than a covetous nature; at least his avarice was subservient to his ambition, and he laid up wealth in his coffers, as he did arms in his magazines, to be drawn out, when any proper occasion required it, for the defence and enlargement of his dominions.

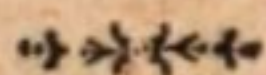
Upon the whole, he had many great qualities, but few virtues; and if those actions that most particularly distinguish the man or the king are impartially considered, we shall find that in his character there is much to admire, but still much to abhor.



CHARACTER OF WILLIAM RUFUS.

BY HUME.

The memory of this monarch is transmitted to us with little advantage by the churchmen, whom he had offended, and though we may suspect in general that their account of his vices is somewhat exaggerated, his conduct affords little reason for contradicting the character which they have assigned him, or for attributing to him any very estimable qualities: he seems to have been a violent and tyrannical prince; a perfidious, encroaching, and dangerous neighbour; an unkind and ungenerous relation. He was equally prodigal and rapacious in the management of the treasury; and, if he possessed abilities, he lay so much under the government of impetuous passions, that he made little use of them in his administration; and he indulged entirely the domineering policy which suited his temper, and which, if supported, as it was in him, with courage and vigour, proves often more successful in disorderly times, than the deepest foresight and most refined artifice. The monuments which remain of this prince in England are, the Tower, Westminster-Hall, and London Bridge, which he built. He died August 2, 1100, aged 40.

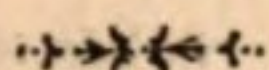


CHARACTER OF WILLIAM RUFUS.

BY SMOLLET.

Thus fell William, surnamed Rufus *, from his red hair and florid complexion, after he had lived forty-four years, and reigned near thirteen; during which time he oppressed his people in every form of tyranny and insult. He was equally void of learning, principle, and honour; haughty, passionate, and ungrateful; a scoffer at religion, a scourge to the clergy; vain-glorious, talkative, rapacious, lavish, and dissolute; and an inveterate enemy to the English, though he owed his crown to their valour and fidelity, when the Norman lords intended to expel him from the throne. In return for this instance of their loyalty, he took *all* opportunities to fleece and enslave them; and at one time imprisoned fifty of the best families in the kingdom, on pretence of killing his deer; so that they were compelled to purchase their liberty at the expence of their wealth, though not before they had undergone the *fiery ordeal*. He lived in a scandalous commerce with prostitutes, professing

* By the hand of Tyrrel, a French gentleman, remarkable for his address in archery, attending him in the recreation of hunting: as William had dismounted after a chase, Tyrrel, impatient to shew his dexterity, let fly at a stag which suddenly started before him; the arrow glancing from a tree struck the king in his breast, and instantly slew him.

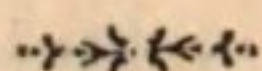


his contempt for marriage; and, having no legitimate issue, the crown devolved to his brother Henry, who was so intent upon the succession, that he paid very little regard to the funeral of the deceased king.

CHARACTER OF HENRY I.

BY HUME.

This prince was one of the most accomplished that has filled the English throne; and possessed all the qualities both of body and mind, natural and acquired, which could fit him for the high station to which he attained: his person was manly; his countenance engaging; his eyes clear, serene, and penetrating. The affability of his address encouraged those who might be over-awed by the sense of his dignity or his wisdom; and though he often indulged his facetious humour, he knew how to temper it with discretion, and ever kept at a distance from all indecent familiarities with his courtiers. His superior eloquence and judgment would have given him an ascendant, even if he had been born in a private station; and his personal bravery would have procured him respect, even though it had been less supported by art and policy. By his great progress in literature, he acquired the name of *Beau Clerc*, or the Scholar; but his application to sedentary pursuits abated nothing of the activity and vigilance of his government: and though the learning of that age was better fitted to corrupt than improve the understanding; his natural good sense

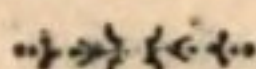


preserved itself untainted both from the pedantry and superstition which were then so prevalent among men of letters. His temper was very susceptible of the sentiments, as well of friendship as resentment; and his ambition, though high, might be esteemed moderate, had not his conduct towards his brother shewed, that he was too much disposed to sacrifice to it all the maxims of justice and equity. He died December 1, 1135, aged 67, having reigned 35 years.

CHARACTER OF HENRY I.

BY SMOLLETT.

Henry was of a middle stature and robust make, with dark brown hair, and blue serene eyes. He was facetious, fluent, and affable to his favourites. His capacity, naturally good, was improved and cultivated in such a manner, that he acquired the name of *Beau Clerc* by his learning. He was cool, cautious, politic, and penetrating; his courage was unquestioned, and his fortitude invincible. He was vindictive, cruel, and implacable, inexorable to offenders, rigid and severe in the execution of justice; and, though temperate in his diet, a voluptuary in his amours, which produced a numerous family of illegitimate issue. His Norman descent and connexions with the continent inspired him with a contempt for the English, whom he oppressed in the most tyrannical manner.



CHARACTER OF STEPHEN.

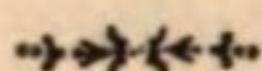
BY HUME.

England suffered great miseries during the reign of this prince : but his personal character, allowing for the temerity and injustice of his usurpation, appears not liable to any great exception; and he seems to have been well qualified, had he succeeded by a just title, to have promoted the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. He was possessed of industry, activity, and courage, to a great degree; was not deficient in ability, had the talent of gaining men's affections; and, notwithstanding his precarious situation, never indulged himself in the exercise of any cruelty or revenge. His advancement to the throne procured him neither tranquillity nor happiness. He died 1154.

CHARACTER OF STEPHEN.

BY SMOLLETT.

Stephen was a prince of great courage, fortitude, and activity, and might have reigned with the approbation of his people, had he not been harassed by the efforts of a powerful competitor, which obliged him to take such measures for his safety as were inconsistent with the dictates of honour, which indeed his ambition prompted him to forego, in his first endeavours to ascend the throne. His necessities afterwards compelled him to infringe the char-

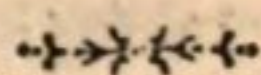


ter of privileges he granted at his accession; and he was instigated by his jealousy and resentment to commit the most flagrant outrages against gratitude and sound policy. His vices, as a king, seem to have been the effect of troubles in which he was involved; for, as a man, he was brave, open, and liberal; and, during the short calm that succeeded the tempest of his reign, he made a progress through his kingdom, published an edict to restrain all rapine and violence, and disbanded the foreign mercenaries who had preyed so long on his people.

CHARACTER OF HENRY II.

BY HUME.

Thus died, in the 58th year of his age, and thirty-fifth of his reign, the greatest prince of his time for wisdom, virtue, and ability, and the most powerful in extent of dominion, of all those that had ever filled the throne of England. His character, both in public and private life, is almost without a blemish; and he seems to have possessed every accomplishment, both of body and mind, which makes a man estimable or amiable. He was of a middle stature, strong, and well proportioned; his countenance was lively and engaging; his conversation affable and entertaining; his elocution easy, persuasive, and ever at command. He loved peace, but possessed both conduct and bravery in war; was provident without timidity; severe in

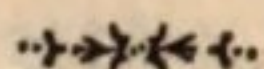


the execution of justice without rigour; and temperate without austerity. He preserved health, and kept himself from corpulency, to which he was somewhat inclined, by an abstemious diet, and by frequent exercise, particularly by hunting. When he could enjoy leisure, he recreated himself in learned conversation, or in reading; and he cultivated his natural talents by study, above any prince of his time. His affections, as well as his enmities, were warm and durable; and his long experience of ingratitude and infidelity of men never destroyed the natural sensibility of his temper, which disposed him to friendship and society. His character has been transmitted to us by many writers who were his contemporaries; and it resembles extremely, in its most remarkable strokes, that of his maternal grandfather, Henry I. excepting only that ambition, which was a ruling passion in both, found not in the first Henry such unexceptionable means of exerting itself, and pushed that prince into measures which were both criminal in themselves, and were the cause of further crimes, from which his grandson's conduct was happily exempted. He died 1189.

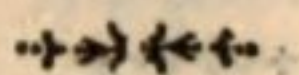
CHARACTER OF HENRY II.

BY SMOLLETT.

Thus died Henry in the fifty-seventh year of his age (Hume says 58), and thirty-fifth of his reign; in the course of which he had, on sundry occasions,



displayed all the abilities of a politician, all the sagacity of a legislator, and all the magnanimity of a hero. He lived revered above all the princes of his time; and his death was deeply lamented by his subjects, whose happiness seems to have been the chief aim of all his endeavours. He not only enacted wholesome laws, but saw them executed with great punctuality. He was generous, even to admiration, with regard to those who committed offences against his own person; but he never forgave the injuries that were offered to his people, for atrocious crimes were punished severely without respect of persons. He was of a middle stature, and the most exact proportion; his countenance was round, fair, and ruddy; his blue eyes were mild and engaging, except in a transport of passion, when they sparkled like lightning, to the terror of the beholders. He was broad-chested, strong, muscular, and inclined to be corpulent, though he prevented the bad effects of this disposition by hard exercise and continual fatigue; he was temperate in his meals, even to a degree of abstinence, and seldom or ever sat down, except at supper: he was eloquent, agreeable, and facetious: remarkably courteous and polite; compassionate to all in distress; so charitable, that he constantly allotted one tenth of his household provisions to the poor, and in time of dearth he maintained ten thousand indigent persons, from the beginning of spring till the end of Autumn. His talents, naturally good, he had cultivated with great assiduity, and delighted

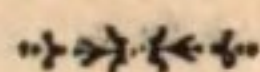


in the conversation of learned men, to whom he was a generous benefactor. His memory was so surprisingly tenacious, that he never forgot a face nor a circumstance that was worth remembering. Though superior to his contemporaries in strength, riches, true courage, and military skill; he never engaged in war without reluctance, and was so averse to bloodshed, that he expressed an uncommon grief at the loss of every private soldier: yet he was not exempt from human frailties; his passions, naturally violent, often hurried him to excess; he was prone to anger, transported with the lust of power, and particularly accused of incontinence, not only in the affair of Rosamond, whom he is said to have concealed in a labyrinth at Woodstock, from the jealous enquiry of his wife, but also in a supposed commerce with the French princess Adalais, who was bred in England as the future wife of his son Richard. This infamous breach of honour and hospitality, if he was actually guilty, is the foulest stain upon his character; though the fact is doubtful, and we hope the charge untrue.

CHARACTER OF RICHARD I.

BY HUME.

The most shining part of this prince's character was his military talents; no man ever in that romantic age carried courage and intrepidity to a greater height; and this quality gained him the



appellation of the *lion-hearted*, *cœur de lion*. He passionately loved glory; and as his conduct in the field was not inferior to his valour, he seems to have possessed every talent necessary for acquiring it: his resentments also were high, his pride unconquerable, and his subjects, as well as his neighbours, had therefore reason to apprehend, from the continuance of his reign, a perpetual scene of blood and violence. Of an impetuous and vehement spirit, he was distinguished by all the good as well as the bad qualities which are incident to that character. He was open, frank, generous, sincere, and brave; he was revengeful, domineering, ambitious, haughty, and cruel, and was thus better calculated to dazzle men by the splendour of his enterprises, than either to promote their happiness or his own grandeur by a sound and well-regulated policy. As military talents make great impression on the people, he seems to have been much beloved by his English subjects; and he is remarked to have been the first prince of the Norman line who bore a sincere affection and regard for them. He passed, however, only four months of his reign in that kingdom: the crusade employed him near three years: he was detained about four months in captivity; the rest of his reign was spent either in war, or preparations for war against France: and he was so pleased with the fame which he had acquired in the East, that he seemed determined, notwithstanding all his past misfortunes, to have further exhausted his kingdom, and

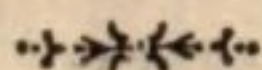


to have exposed himself to new hazards, by conducting another expedition against the infidels. He died April 6, 1199, aged 42. Reigned ten years.

CHARACTER OF RICHARD I.

BY SMOLLETT.

This renowned prince was tall, strong, straight, and well-proportioned. His arms were remarkably long, his eyes blue, and full of vivacity; his hair was of a yellowish colour; his countenance fair and comely, and his air majestic. He was endowed with good natural understanding; his penetration was uncommon; he possessed a fund of manly eloquence; his conversation was spirited, and he was admired for his talents of repartee; as for his courage and ability in war; both Europe and Asia resound with his praise. The Saracens instilled into their children the terror of his name; and Saladine, who was an accomplished prince, admired his valour to such a degree of enthusiasm, that immediately after Richard had defeated him on the plains of Joppa, he sent him a couple of fine Arabian horses, in token of his esteem; a polite compliment, which Richard returned with magnificent presents. These are the shining parts of his character, which, however, cannot dazzle the judicious observer so much, but that he may perceive a number of blemishes, which no historian has been able to efface from the memory



of this celebrated monarch. His ingratitude and want of filial affection are unpardonable. He was proud, haughty, ambitious, choleric, cruel, vindictive, and debauched; nothing could equal his rapaciousness but his profusion, and, indeed, the one was the effect of the other; he was a tyrant to his wife, as well as to his people, who groaned under his taxations to such a degree, that even the glory of his victories did not exempt him from their execrations; in a word, he has been aptly compared to a lion, a species of animals which he resembled not only in courage, but likewise in ferocity.

CHARACTER OF JOHN.

BY HUME.

The character of this prince is nothing but a complication of vices, equally mean and odious, ruinous to himself, and destructive to his people: cowardice, inactivity, folly, levity, licentiousness, ingratitude, treachery, tyranny, and cruelty; all these qualities too evidently appear in the several incidents of his life, to give us room to suspect, that the disagreeable picture has been anywise overcharged by the prejudice of the ancient historians. It is hard to say, whether his conduct to his father, his brother, his nephew, or his subjects, was most culpable; or whether his crimes in these respects were not even exceeded by the baseness which appeared in his transactions with



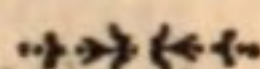
the king of France, the pope, and the barons. His dominions, when they devolved to him by the death of his brother, were more extensive than have ever since his time been ruled by any English monarch. But he first lost, by his misconduct, the flourishing provinces in France; the ancient patrimony of his family. He subjected his kingdom to a shameful vassalage, under the See of Rome; he saw the prerogatives of his crown diminished by law, and still more reduced by faction; and he died at last when in danger of being totally expelled by a foreign power, and of either ending his life miserably in a prison, or seeking shelter as a fugitive from the pursuit of his enemies.

The prejudices against this prince were so violent, that he was believed to have sent an embassy to the emperor of Morocco, and to have offered to change his religion and become Mahometan, in order to purchase the protection of that monarch; but, though that story is told us on plausible authority, it is in itself utterly improbable, except that there is nothing so incredible as may not become likely from the folly and wickedness of John. He died 1216.

CHARACTER OF JOHN.

BY SMOLLETT.

John was in his person taller than the middle size, of a good shape and agreeable countenance:

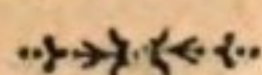


with respect to his disposition, it is strongly delineated in the transactions of his reign. If his understanding was contemptible, his heart was the object of detestation; we find him slothful, shallow, proud, imperious, cowardly, libidinous, and inconstant, abject in adversity, and overbearing in success; contemned and hated by his subjects, over whom he tyrannized to the utmost of his power; abhorred by the clergy, whom he oppressed with exactions; and despised by all the neighbouring princes of Europe: though he might have passed through life without incurring such a load of odium and contempt, had not his reign been perplexed by the turbulence of his barons, the rapaciousness of the pope, and the ambition of such a monarch as Philip Augustus; his character could never have afforded one quality that would have exempted him from the disgust and scorn of his people: nevertheless, it must be owned, that his reign is not altogether barren of laudable transactions. He regulated the form of the government in the city of London, and several other places in the kingdom. He was the first who coined sterling money.

CHARACTER OF HENRY III.

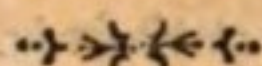
BY HUME.

The most obvious circumstance of Henry the Third's character, is his incapacity for government, which rendered him as much a prisoner in



the hands of his own ministers and favourites, and as little at his own disposal, as when detained a captive in the hands of his enemies. From this source, rather than from insincerity and treachery, arose his negligence in observing his promises; and he was too easily induced, for the sake of present convenience, to sacrifice the lasting advantages arising from the trust and confidence of his people. Hence were derived his profusion to favourites, his attachment to strangers, the variableness of his conduct, his hasty resentments, and his sudden forgiveness and return of affection. Instead of reducing the dangerous power of his nobles, by obliging them to observe the laws towards their inferiors, and setting them the salutary example in his own government, he was seduced to imitate their conduct, and to make his arbitrary will, or rather that of his ministers, the rule of his actions.

Instead of accommodating himself, by a strict frugality, to the embarrassed situation in which his revenue had been left, by the military expedition of his uncle, the dissipations of his father, and the usurpations of the barons; he was tempted to levy money by irregular exactions, which, without enriching himself, impoverished, or at least disgusted, his people. Of all men, nature seemed least to have fitted him for being a tyrant; yet are there instances of oppression in his reign, which, though derived from the precedents left him by his predecessors, had been carefully guarded

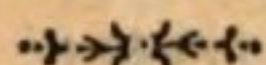


against by the great charter ; and are inconsistent with all rules of good government : and, on the whole , we may say, that greater abilities, with his good dispositions , would have prevented him from falling into his faults ; or, with worse dispositions , would have enabled him to maintain and defend them. He died November 16 , 1272 , aged 64. Reigned 56 years.

CHARACTER OF HENRY III.

BY SMOLLETT.

Henry was of a middle size, and robust make, and his countenance had a peculiar cast from his left eye-lid, which hung down so far as to cover part of his eye. The particulars of his character may be gathered from the detail of his conduct. He was certainly a prince of very mean talents ; irresolute , inconstant, and capricious ; proud , insolent , and arbitrary ; arrogant in prosperity , and abject in adversity ; profuse , rapacious , and choleric , though destitute of liberality , economy , and courage ; yet his continence was praise-worthy, as well as his aversion to cruelty ; for he contented himself with punishing the rebels in their effects, when he might have glutted his revenge with their blood. He was prodigal even to excess, and therefore always in necessity. Notwithstanding the great sums he levied from his subjects , and though



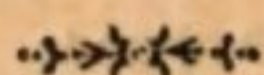
his occasions were never so pressing, he could not help squandering away his money upon worthless favourites, without considering the difficulty he always found in obtaining supplies from parliament.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD I.

BY HUME.

The enterprises finished by this prince, and the projects which he formed, and brought very near to a conclusion, were more prudent and more regularly conducted, and more advantageous to the solid interest of this kingdom, than those which were undertaken in any reign either of his ancestors or successors. He restored authority to the government, disordered by the weakness of his father; he maintained the laws against all the efforts of his turbulent barons; he fully annexed to the crown the principality of Wales; he took the wisest and most effectual measures for reducing Scotland to a like condition; and though the equity of this latter enterprise may reasonably be questioned, the circumstances of the two kingdoms promised such success, and the advantage was so visible, of uniting the whole island under one head, that those who give great indulgence to reasons of state in the measures of princes, will not be apt to regard this part of his conduct with much severity.

But Edward, however exceptionable his charac-

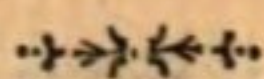


ter may appear on the head of justice, is the model of a politic and warlike king. He possessed industry, penetration, courage, vigour, and enterprise. He was frugal in all expences that were not necessary; he knew how to open the public treasures on proper occasions; he punished criminals with severity; he was gracious and affable to his servants and courtiers; and being of a majestic figure, expert at all bodily exercise, and in the main well proportioned in his limbs, notwithstanding the great length of his legs, he was as well qualified to captivate the populace by his exterior appearance, as to gain the approbation of men of sense by his more solid virtues. He died July 7, 1307, aged 69. Reigned 35 years.

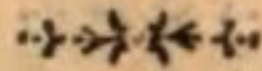
CHARACTER OF EDWARD I.

BY SMOLLETT.

He was a prince of very dignified appearance, tall in stature; regular and comely in his features; with keen piercing eyes, and of an aspect that commanded reverence and esteem. His constitution was robust; his strength and dexterity perhaps unequalled in his kingdom; and his shape was unblemished in all other respects, but that of his legs, which are said to have been too long in proportion to his body; whence he derived the epithet of *Long Shanks*. In the qualities of his head, he equalled the greatest monarchs who have



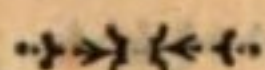
sat on the English throne. He was cool, penetrating, sagacious, and circumspect. The remotest corners of the earth sounded with the fame of his courage; and all over Europe he was considered as the flower of chivalry. Nor was he less consummate in his legislative capacity, than eminent for his prowess. He may be stiled the English Justinian: for, besides the excellent statutes that were enacted in his reign, he new-modelled the administration of justice, so as to render it more sure and summary; he fixed proper bounds to the courts of jurisdiction; settled a new and easy method of collecting the revenue, and established wise and effectual methods of preserving peace and order among his subjects. Yet, with all these good qualities, he cherished a dangerous ambition, to which he did not scruple to sacrifice the good of his country; witness his ruinous war with Scotland, which drained the kingdom of men and money, and gave rise to that rancorous enmity which proved so prejudicial to both nations. Though he is celebrated for his chastity and regular deportment, there is not, in the whole course of his reign, one instance of his liberality and munificence. He had great abilities, but no genius; and was an accomplished warrior, without the least spark of heroism.



CHARACTER OF EDWARD II.

BY HUME.

It is not easy to imagine a man more innocent or inoffensive than this unhappy king; nor a prince less fitted for governing that fierce and turbulent people subjected to his authority. He was obliged to devolve on others the weight of government which he had neither ability nor inclination to bear: the same indolence and want of penetration led him to make choice of ministers and favourites, which were not always best qualified for the trust committed to them. The seditious grandees, pleased with his weakness, and complaining of it, under pretence of attacking his ministers, insulted his person, and invaded his authority; and the impatient populace, ignorant of the source of their grievances, threw all the blame upon the king, and increased the public disorders by their faction and insolence. It was in vain to look for protection from the laws, the voice of which, always feeble in those times, was not heard in the din of arms: what could not defend the king, was less able to give shelter to any one of his people; the whole machine of government was torn in pieces, with fury and violence; and men, instead of complaining against the manners of the age, and the form of their constitution, which required the most steady and the most skilful hand to conduct



them, imputed all errors to the person who had the misfortune to be intrusted with the reins of empire. He was murdered 21 September, 1327.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD II.

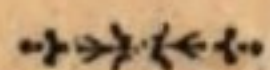
BY SMOLLETT.

Thus perished Edward II. after having atoned by his sufferings for all the errors of his conduct. He is said to have resembled his father in the accomplishments of his person, as well as in his countenance : but in other respects he seems only to have inherited the defects of his character ; for he was cruel and illiberal, without his valour or capacity. He had levity, indolence, and irresolution, in common with other weak princes ; but the distinguishing foible of his character, was that unaccountable passion for the reigning favourites, to which he sacrificed every other consideration of policy and convenience, and at last fell a miserable victim.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD III.

BY HUME.

The English are apt to consider with peculiar fondness the history of Edward the Third, and to esteem his reign, as it was one of the longest, the most glorious also, which occurs in the annals of



the nation. The ascendant which they began to have over France, their rival and national enemy, makes them cast their eyes on this period with great complacency, and sanctifies every measure which Edward embraced for that end. But the domestic government is really more admirable than his foreign victories; and England enjoyed, by his prudence and vigour of administration, a longer interval of domestic peace and tranquillity, than she had been blest with in any former period, or than she experienced for many years after. He gained the affections of the great, and curbed their licentiousness: he made them feel his power, without their daring, or even being inclined to murmur at it; his affable and obliging behaviour, his munificence and generosity, made them submit with pleasure to his dominion; his valour and conduct made them successful in most of their enterprises; and their unquiet spirits, directed against a public enemy, had no leisure to breed disturbances, to which they were naturally so much inclined, and which the form of the government seemed so much to authorize. This was the chief benefit which resulted from Edward's victories and conquests. His foreign wars were, in other respects, neither founded in justice, nor directed to any very salutary purpose. His attempt against the King of Scotland, a minor, and a brother-in-law, and the revival of his grandfather's claim of superiority over that kingdom, were both unreasonable and ungenerous; and he allowed himself to

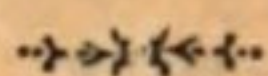


be too soon seduced, by the glaring prospects of French conquest, from the acquisition of a point which was practicable, and which might really, if attained, have been of lasting utility to his country and to his successors. But the glory of a conqueror is so dazzling to the vulgar, and the animosity of nations so extreme, that the fruitless desolation of so fine a part of Europe as France is totally disregarded by us, and never considered as a blemish in the character or conduct of this prince: and indeed, from the unfortunate state of human nature, it will commonly happen that a sovereign of great genius, such as Edward, who usually finds every thing easy in the domestic government, will turn himself towards military enterprises, where alone he meets opposition, and where he has full exercise for his industry and capacity. He died 21 of June, aged 65, in the 51st year of his reign.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD III.

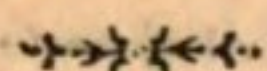
BY SMOLLETT.

Edward's constitution had been impaired by the fatigues of his youth; so that he began to feel the infirmities of old age, before they approach the common course of nature: and now he was seized with a malignant fever, attended with eruptions, that soon put a period to his life. When his distemper became so violent, that no hope of his recovery remained, all his attendants forsook him,



as a bankrupt no longer able to requite their services. The ungrateful ALICE, waiting until she perceived him in the agonies of death, was so inhuman as to strip him of his rings and jewels, and leave him without one domestic to close his eyes, and do the last offices to his breathless corpse. In this deplorable condition, bereft of comfort and assistance, the mighty Edward lay expiring; when a priest, not quite so savage as the rest of his domestics, approached his bed; and, finding him still breathing, began to administer some comfort to his soul. Edward had not yet lost all perception, when he found himself thus abandoned and forlorn, in the last moments of his life. He was just able to express a deep sense of sorrow and contrition for the errors of his conduct, and died pronouncing the name of JESUS.

Such was the piteous and obscure end of Edward the Third, undoubtedly one of the greatest princes that ever swayed the scepter of England; whether we respect him as a warrior, a lawgiver, a monarch, or a man. He possessed all the romantic spirit of Alexander; the penetration, the fortitude, the polished manners of Julius; the liberality, the munificence, the wisdom of Augustus Cæsar. He was tall, majestic, finely shaped, with a piercing eye, and aquiline visage. He excelled all his contemporaries in feats of arms, and personal address. He was courteous, affable, and eloquent; of a free deportment, and agreeable conversation; and had the art of commanding the affection of his



subjects, without seeming to solicit popularity. The love of glory was certainly the predominant passion of Edward, to the gratification of which he did not scruple to sacrifice the feelings of humanity, the lives of his subjects, and the interests of his country. And nothing could have induced or enabled his people to bear the load of taxes with which they were encumbered in his reign, but the love and admiration of his person, the fame of his victories, and the excellent laws and regulations which the parliament enacted with his advice and concurrence.

CHARACTER OF RICHARD II.

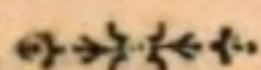
BY HUME.

All the writers who have transmitted to us the history of Richard, composed their works during the reign of the Lancastrian princes; and candour requires that we should not give entire credit to the reproaches which have been thrown upon his memory. But after making all proper abatements, he still appears to have been a weak prince, and unfit for government; less for want of natural parts and capacity, than of solid judgment and good education. He was violent in his temper, profuse in his expences, fond of idle show and magnificence, devoted to favourites, and addicted to pleasure; passions, all of them, the most inconsistent with a prudent economy, and consequently



dangerous in a limited and mixed government. Had he possessed the talents of gaining, and still more, of overawing his great Barons, he might have escaped all the misfortunes of his reign, and been allowed to carry much further his oppressions over his people, if he really was guilty of any, without their daring to rebel, or even murmur against him. But when the grandees were tempted, by his want of prudence and rigour, to resist his authority, and execute the most violent enterprises upon him, he was naturally led to seek for an opportunity of retaliation. Justice was neglected; the lives of the chief nobility sacrificed; and all these evils seem to have proceeded more from a settled design of establishing arbitrary power, than from the insolence of victory, and the necessities of the king's situation. The manners, indeed, of the age were the chief sources of such violence; laws, which were feebly executed in peaceable times, lost all their authority, in public convulsions. Both parties were alike guilty; or, if any difference may be remarked between them, we shall find the authority of the crown, being more legal, was commonly carried, when it prevailed, to less desperate extremities than those of aristocracy. *

* He was starved to death in prison, or murdered, after having been dethroned, A. D. 1399, in the year of his age 34; of his reign 23.



CHARACTER OF RICHARD II.

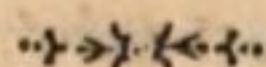
BY SMOLLETT.

Such was the last conclusion of Richard the Second; a weak, vain, frivolous, inconstant prince; without weight to balance the scales of government, without discernment to choose a good ministry; without virtue to oppose the measures, or advice, of evil counsellors, even where they happened to clash with his own principles and opinion. He was a dupe to flattery, a slave to ostentation, and not more apt to give up his reason to the suggestion of sycophants, and vicious ministers, than to sacrifice those ministers to his safety. He was idle, profuse, and profligate; and, though brave by starts, naturally pusillanimous, and irresolute. His pride and resentment prompted him to cruelty and breach of faith; while his necessities obliged him to fleece his people, and degrade the dignity of his character and situation. Though we find none of his charities on record, all his historians agree, that he excelled all his predecessors in state hospitality, and fed a thousand every day from his kitchen.

CHARACTER OF RICHARD II.

BY HENRY.

Richard of Bourdeaux, (so called from the place of his birth), was remarkably beautiful and

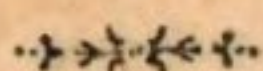


handsome in his person; and does not seem to be naturally defective, either in courage or understanding. For on some occasions, particularly in the dangerous insurrections of the crown, he acted with a degree of spirit and prudence superior to his years. But his education was miserably neglected; or, rather, he was intentionally corrupted and debauched by three ambitious uncles, who, being desirous of retaining the management of his affairs, encouraged him to spend his time in the company of dissolute young people of both sexes, in a continual course of feasting and dissipation. By this means, he contracted a taste for pomp and pleasure, and a dislike to business. The greatest foible in the character of this unhappy prince was an excessive fondness for, and unbounded liberality to his favourites, which enraged his uncles, particularly the Duke of Gloucester, and disgusted such of the nobility as did not partake of his bounty. He was an affectionate husband, a generous master, and a faithful friend; and if he had received a proper education, might have proved a great and good King.

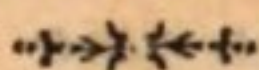
CHARACTER OF HENRY IV.

BY HUME.

The great popularity which Henry enjoyed before he attained the crown, and which had so much aided him in the acquisition of it, was entirely



lost, many years before the end of his reign, and he governed the people more by terror than affection, more by his own policy than their sense of duty and allegiance. When men came to reflect in cold blood on the crimes which led him to the throne; and the rebellion against his prince, the deposition of a lawful king, guilty sometimes of oppression, but more frequently of imprudences; the exclusion of the true heir; the murder of his sovereign and near relation; these were such enormities, as drew on him the hatred of his subjects, sanctified all the rebellions against him, and made the executions, though not remarkably severe, which he found necessary for the maintenance of his authority, appear cruel as well as iniquitous to his people. Yet, without pretending to apologize for these crimes, which must ever be held in detestation, it may be remarked, that he was insensibly led into this blameable conduct, by a train of incidents, which few men possess virtue enough to withstand. The injustice with which his predecessor had treated him, in first condemning him to banishment, and then despoiling him of his patrimony, made him naturally think of revenge, and of recovering his lost rights; the headstrong zeal of the people hurried him to the throne; the care of his own security, as well as his ambition, made him an usurper; and the steps have always been so few between the prisons of princes and their graves, that we need not wonder that Richard's fate was no exception to the general rule. All these

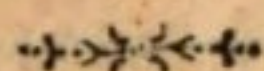


considerations made the King's situation, if he retained any sense of virtue, very much to be lamented; and the inquietudes, with which he possessed his envied greatness, and the remorse by which, it is said, he was continually haunted, rendered him an object of our pity, even when seated upon the throne. But it must be owned, that his prudence, vigilance, and foresight in maintaining his power, were admirable; his command of temper remarkable; his courage, both military and political, without blemish: and he possessed many qualities, which fitted him for his high station, and which rendered his usurpation of it, though pernicious in after-times, rather salutary during his own reign, to the English nation. He died 1413, aged 43.

CHARACTER OF HENRY IV.

BY SMOLLETT.

Henry IV. was of a middle stature, well proportioned, and perfect in all the exercises of arms and chivalry; his countenance was severe, rather than serene, and his disposition sour, sullen, and reserved: he possessed a great share of courage, fortitude, and penetration; was naturally imperious, though he bridled his temper with a great deal of caution; superstitious, though without the least tincture of virtue and true religion; and meanly parsimonious, though justly censured for want of



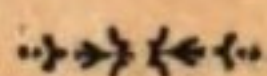
economy, and ill-judged profusion. He was tame from caution, humble from fear, cruel from policy, and rapacious from indigence. He rose to the throne by perfidy and treason; he established his authority in the blood of his subjects, and died a penitent for his sins; because he could no longer enjoy the fruit of his transgressions.

CHARACTER OF HENRY V.

BY HUME.

This prince possessed many eminent virtues; and, if we give indulgence to ambition in a monarch, or rank it, as the vulgar do, among his virtues, they were unstained by any considerable blemish; his abilities appeared equally in the cabinet and in the field: the boldness of his enterprises was no less remarkable than his personal valour in conducting them. He had the talent of attaching his friends by affability, and gaining his enemies by address and clemency.

The English, dazzled by the lustre of his character, and still more by that of his victories, were reconciled to the defects of his title. The French almost forgot he was an enemy; and his care of maintaining justice in his civil administration, and preserving discipline in his armies, made some amends to both nations for the calamities inseparable from those wars in which his short reign was almost occupied. That he could forgive the Earl of Marche, who had a better right to the throne



than himself, is a sure proof of his magnanimity; and that the Earl relied so on his friendship, is no less a proof of his established character for candour and sincerity. There remain, in history, few instances of such mutual trust; and still fewer, where neither found reason to repent it. The exterior figure of this great prince, as well as his deportment, was engaging. His stature was somewhat above the middle size; his countenance beautiful, his limbs genteel and slender, but full of vigour; and he excelled in all warlike and manly exercises.

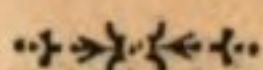
He died 31st August, 1422: in the year of his age 34; of his reign, the 10th.

CHARACTER OF HENRY V.

BY SMOLLETT.

Henry was tall and slender, with a long neck, and engaging aspect, and limbs of the most elegant turn. He excelled all the youth of that age, in agility, and the exercise of arms; was hardy, patient, laborious, and more capable of enduring cold, hunger, and fatigue, than any individual in his army. His valour was such as no danger could startle, and no difficulty oppose; nor was his policy inferior to his courage.

He managed the dissensions among his enemies with such address, as spoke him consummate in the arts of the cabinet. He fomented their jealousy,



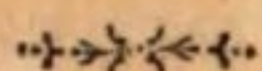
and converted their mutual resentment to his own advantage.

Henry possessed a self-taught genius, that blazed out at once, without the aid of instruction and experience; and a fund of natural sagacity, that made ample amends for all these defects. He was chaste, temperate, moderate, and devout, scrupulously just in his administration, and severely exact in the discipline of his army; upon which he knew his glory and success, in a great measure, depended. In a word it must be owned, he was without an equal in the arts of war, policy, and government. But we cannot be so far dazzled with his great qualities, as to overlook the defects in his character. His pride and imperious temper lost him the hearts of the French nobility, and frequently fell out into outrage and abuse; as at the siege of Melun, when he treated the Marechal l'Isle d'Adam with the utmost indignity, although that nobleman had given him no other offence, than that of coming into his presence in plain decent apparel.

HUME's ACCOUNT OF HENRY VI.

(For there is no regular Character of this prince given by this historian) is expressed in the following manner.

In this manner finished the reign of Henry VI. who, while yet in his cradle, had been proclaimed king both of France and England, and who began



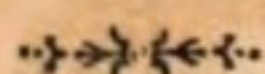
his life with the most splendid prospects which any prince in Europe had ever enjoyed. The revolution was unhappy for his people, as it was the source of civil wars; but was almost entirely indifferent to Henry himself, who was utterly incapable of exercising his authority; and who, provided he met perpetually with good usage, was equally easy, as he was equally enslaved, in the hands of his enemies and of his friends. His weakness, and his disputed title, were the chief causes of his public misfortunes: but whether his queen and his ministers were not guilty of some great abuses of power, it is not easy for us, at this distance of time, to determine. There remain no proofs on record of any considerable violation of the laws, except in the death of the Duke of Gloucester, which was a private crime, formed no precedent, and was but too much of a piece with the usual ferocity and cruelty of the times.

SMOLLETT'S ACCOUNT
OF THE DEATH OF HENRY VI.

with some strictures of character, is as follows.

This insurrection * in all probability hastened the death of the unfortunate Henry, who was found dead in the tower, in which he had been confined since the restoration of Edward. The greater part of historians have alledged, that he was assassinated

* Revolt of the Bastard of Falconbridge.



by the Duke of Gloucester, who was a Prince of the most brutal disposition; while some moderns, from an affectation of singularity, affirm that Henry died of grief and vexation. This, no doubt, might have been the case; and it must be owned, that nothing appears in history from which either Edward or Richard could be convicted of having contrived or perpetrated his murder: but, at the same time, we must observe some concurring circumstances that amount to strong presumption against the reigning monarch. Henry was of a hale constitution, but just turned of fifty, naturally insensible of affliction, and hackneyed in the vicissitudes of fortune, so that one would not expect he should have died of age and infirmity, or that his life would have been affected by grief arising from his last disaster. His sudden death was suspicious, as well as the conjuncture at which he died, immediately after the suppression of a rebellion, which seemed to declare that Edward would never be quiet, while the head of the House of Lancaster remained alive: and lastly, the suspicion is confirmed by the characters of the reigning king and his brother Richard, who were bloody, barbarous, and unrelenting. Very different was the disposition of the ill-fated Henry; who, without any princely virtue, or qualification, was totally free from cruelty or revenge; on the contrary, he could not, without reluctance, consent to the punishment of those malefactors who were sacrificed to the public safety; and frequently sustained indignities of the grossest nature, without



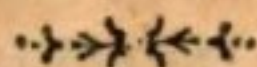
discovering the least mark of resentment. He was chaste, pious, compassionate, and charitable; and so inoffensive, that the Bishop, who was his confessor for ten years, declares, that in all that time he had never committed any sin that required penance or rebuke. In a word, he would have adorned a cloister, though he disgraced a crown; and was rather respectable for those vices he wanted, than for those virtues he possessed. He founded the colleges of Eaton and Windsor, and King's College in Cambridge, for the reception of those scholars who had begun their studies at Eaton.

On the morning that succeeded his death, his body was exposed at St. Paul's church, in order to prevent unfavourable conjectures, and, next day, sent by water to the Abbey of Chertsey, where he was interred: but it was afterwards removed by order of Richard III. to Windsor, and there buried with great funeral solemnity.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD IV.

BY HUME.

EDWARD IV. was a prince more splendid and shewy, than either prudent or virtuous; brave, though cruel; addicted to pleasure, though capable of activity in great emergencies; and less fitted to prevent ills by wise precautions, than to remedy them after they took place, by his vigour and enterprise.



CHARACTER OF EDWARD IV.

BY SMOLLETT.

He was a prince of the most elegant person and insinuating address; endowed with the utmost fortitude and intrepidity; possessed of uncommon sagacity and penetration; but, like all his ancestors, was brutally cruel and vindictive, perfidious, lewd, perjured, and rapacious; without one liberal thought, without one sentiment of humanity.

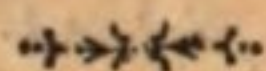
EDWARD V.

Immediately after the death of the fourth Edward, his son was proclaimed king of England, by the name of Edward V. though that young prince was but just turned of twelve years of age, never received the crown, nor exercised any function of royalty; so that the interval between the death of his father and the usurpation of his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III. was properly an interregnum, during which the uncle took his measures for wresting the crown from his nephew.

CHARACTER OF RICHARD III.

BY HUME.

Those historians who favour Richard, for even *He* has met partizans among later writers, maintain that he was well qualified for government, had he



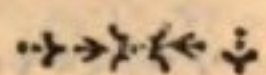
legally obtained it; and that he committed no crimes but such as were necessary to procure him possession of the crown : but this is a very poor apology, when it is confessed, that he was ready to commit the most horrid crimes which appeared necessary for that purpose; and it is certain, that all his courage and capacity, qualities in which he really seems not to have been deficient, would never have made compensation to the people for the danger of the precedent, and for the contagious example of vice and murder exalted upon the throne. This prince was of small stature, hump-backed, and had a very harsh disagreeable visage; so that his body was in every particular no less deformed than his mind.

CHARACTER OF RICHARD III.

BY SMOLLETT.

Such was the end of Richard III. * the most cruel unrelenting tyrant that ever sat on the throne of England. He seems to have been an utter stranger to the softer emotions of the human heart, and entirely destitute of every social enjoyment. His ruling passion was ambition; for the gratification of which he trampled upon every law, both human and divine; but this thirst of dominion was unattended with the least work of generosity, or any desire of rendering himself agreeable to his fellow-creatures : it was the ambition of a savage,

* Slain at the battle of Bosworth.



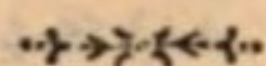
not of a prince; for he was a solitary King, altogether detached from the rest of mankind, and incapable of that satisfaction which results from private friendship and disinterested society. We must acknowledge, however, that after his accession to the throne, his administration in general was conducted by the rules of justice; that he enacted salutary laws, and established wise regulations; and that if his reign had been protracted, he might have proved an excellent King to the English nation. He was dark, silent, and reserved; and so much master of dissimulation, that it was almost impossible to dive into his real sentiments, when he wanted to conceal his designs. His stature was small, his aspect cloudy, severe, and forbidding: one of his arms was withered, and one shoulder higher than another, from which circumstance of deformity he acquired the epithet of Crook-backed.

CHARACTER OF HENRY VII.

BY HUME.

The reign of Henry VII. was in the main fortunate for his people at home, and honourable abroad. He put an end to the civil wars with which the nation had been so long harassed; he maintained peace and order to the state; he depressed the former exorbitant power of the nobility; and, together with the friendship of some foreign princes, he acquired the consideration and regard of all.

He loved peace, without fearing war; though



agitated with criminal suspicions of his servants and ministers, he discovered no timidity, either in the conduct of his affairs, or in the day of battle; and, though often severe in his punishments, he was commonly less actuated by revenge than by the maxims of policy.

The services which he rendered his people were derived from his views of private interest, rather than the motives of public spirit; and where he deviated from selfish regards, it was unknown to himself, and ever from malignant prejudices, or the mean projects of avarice; not from the sallies of passion, or allurements of pleasure; still less from the benign motives of friendship and generosity.

His capacity was excellent, but somewhat contracted by the narrowness of his heart; he possessed insinuation and address, but never employed these talents except some great point of interest was to be gained; and while he neglected to conciliate the affections of his people, he often felt the danger of resting his authority on their fear and reverence alone. He was always extremely attentive to his affairs; but possessed not the faculty of seeing far into futurity; and was more expert at promoting a remedy for his mistakes, than judicious in avoiding them. Avarice was on the whole his ruling passion; and he remained an instance almost singular, of a man placed in a high station, and possessed of talents for great affairs, in whom that passion predominated above



ambition. Even among private persons, avarice is nothing but a species of ambition, and is chiefly incited by the prospect of that regard, distinction, and consideration, which attend on riches.

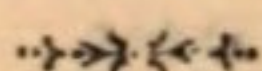
He died April 12, 1509, aged 52, having reigned 23 years.

CHARACTER OF HENRY VII.

BY SMOLLETT.

Henry was tall, straight, and well-shaped, though slender; of a grave aspect, and saturnine complexion; austere in his dress, and reserved in conversation, except when he had a favourite point to carry; and then he would fawn, flatter, and practise all the arts of insinuation. He inherited a natural fund of sagacity, which was improved by study and experience; nor was he deficient in personal bravery and political courage. He was cool, close, cunning, dark, distrustful, and designing; and of all the princes who had sat on the English throne, the most sordid, selfish, and ignorant. He possessed in a peculiar manner, the art of turning all his domestic troubles, and all his foreign disputes, to his own advantage; hence he acquired the appellation of the English Solomon; and all the powers of the continent courted his alliance, on account of his wealth, wisdom, and uninterrupted prosperity.

The nobility he excluded entirely from the ad-

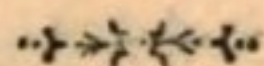


ministration of public affairs, and employed clergymen and lawyers, who, as they had no interest in the nation, and depended entirely upon his favour, were more obsequious to his will, and ready to concur in all his arbitrary measures. At the same time it must be owned, he was a wise legislator; chaste, temperate, and assiduous in the exercise of religious duties, decent in his deportment, and exact in the administration of justice, when his private interest was not concerned; though he frequently used religion and justice as cloaks for perfidy and oppression. His soul was continually actuated by two ruling passions, equally base and unkingly; namely, the fear of losing his crown, and the desire of amassing riches; and these motives influenced his whole conduct. Nevertheless his apprehension and avarice redounded, on the whole, to the advantage of the nation. The first induced him to depress the nobility, and abolish the feudal tenures, which rendered them equally formidable to the prince and people; and his avarice prompted him to encourage industry and trade, because it improved his customs, and enriched his subjects, whom he could afterwards pilage at discretion.

CHARACTER OF HENRY VIII.

BY HUME.

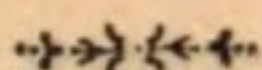
It is difficult to give a just summary of this prince's qualities; he was so different from himself



in different parts of his reign, that, as is well remarked by Lord Herbert, his history is his best character and description. The absolute and uncontrolled authority which he maintained at home, and the regard he obtained among foreign nations, are circumstances which entitle him to the appellation of a great prince; while his tyranny and cruelty seem to exclude him from the character of a good one.

He possessed, indeed, great vigour of mind, which qualified him for exercising dominion over men; courage, intrepidity, vigilance, inflexibility; and though these qualities lay not always under the guidance of a regular and solid judgement, they were accompanied with good parts, and an extensive capacity; and every one dreaded a contest with a man who was never known to yield, or to forgive; and who, in every controversy, was determined to ruin himself, or his antagonist.

A catalogue of his vices would comprehend many of the worst qualities incident to human nature. Violence, cruelty, profusion, rapacity, injustice, obstinacy, arrogance, bigotry, presumption, caprice; but neither was he subject to all these vices in the most extreme degree, nor was he at intervals altogether devoid of virtues. He was sincere, open, gallant, liberal, and capable at least of a temporary friendship and attachment. In this respect, he was unfortunate, that the incidents of his times served to display his faults in their full light; the treatment he met with from



the court of Rome provoked him to violence ; the danger of a revolt from his superstitious subjects seemed to require the most extreme severity. But it must at the same time be acknowledged, that his situation tended to throw an additional lustre on what was great and magnanimous in his character.

The emulation between the emperor and the French King rendered his alliance, notwithstanding his impolitic conduct, of great importance to Europe. The extensive powers of his prerogative and the submission, not to say slavish disposition of his parliament, made it more easy for him to assume and maintain that entire dominion, by which his reign is so much distinguished in English history.

It may seem a little extraordinary, that notwithstanding his cruelty, his extortion, his violence, his arbitrary administration, this prince not only acquired the regard of his subjects, but never was the object of their hatred ; he seems even, in some degree, to have possessed their love and affection. His exterior qualities were advantageous, and fit to captivate the multitude ; his magnificence and personal bravery, rendered him illustrious to vulgar eyes ; and it may be said with truth, that the English, in that age, were so thoroughly subdued, that, like eastern slaves, they were inclined to admire even those acts of violence and tyranny, which were exercised over themselves, and at their own expence.

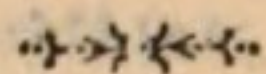
He died January 28, 1547, anno ætatis 57 regni 37.

CHARACTER OF HENRY VIII.

BY SMOLLETT.

Henry VIII. before he became corpulent, was a prince of a goodly personage, and commanding aspect, rather imperious than dignified. He excelled in all the exercises of youth, and possessed a good understanding, which was not much improved by the nature of his education. Instead of learning that philosophy which opens the mind, and extends the qualities of the heart, he was confined to the study of gloomy and scholastic disquisitions, which served to cramp his ideas, and pervert the faculty of reason, qualifying him for the disputant of a cloister, rather than the lawgiver of a people. In the first years of his reign, his pride and vanity seemed to domineer over all his other passions; though from the beginning he was impetuous, head-strong, impatient of contradiction and advice. He was rash, arrogant, prodigal, vain-glorious, pedantic, and superstitious. He delighted in pomp and pageantry, the baubles of a weak mind. His passions, soothed by adulation, rejected all restraint; and as he was an utter stranger to the finer feelings of the soul, he gratified them at the expence of justice and humanity, without remorse or compunction.

He wrested the supremacy from the Bishop of Rome, partly on conscientious motives, and



partly from reasons of state and conveniency. He suppressed the monasteries, in order to supply his extravagance with their spoils: but he would not have made those acquisitions, had they not been productive of advantage to his nobility, and agreeable to the nation in general. He was frequently at war, but the greatest conquest he obtained was over his own parliament and people. Religious disputes had divided them into two factions. As he had it in his power to make either scale preponderate, each courted his favour with the most obsequious submission, and, in trimming the balance, he kept them both in subjection. In accustoming them to these abject compliances, they degenerated into slaves, and he, from their prostitution, acquired the most despotic authority. He became rapacious, arbitrary, froward, fretful, and so cruel that he seemed to delight in the blood of his subjects.

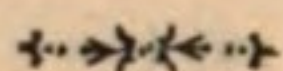
He never seemed to betray the least symptoms of tenderness in his disposition: and, as we have already observed, his kindness to Cranmer was an inconsistency in his character. He seemed to live in defiance of censure, whether ecclesiastical or secular: he died in apprehension of futurity; and was buried at Windsor, with idle processions and childish pageantry, which in those days passed for real taste and magnificence.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD VI.

BY BURNET.

Thus died Edward VI. in the sixteenth year of his age. He was counted the wonder of his time: he was not only learned in the tongues and the liberal sciences, but he knew well the state of his kingdom. He kept a table-book, in which he had written the characters of all the eminent men of the nation. He studied fortification, and understood the mint well. He knew the harbours in all his dominions, with the depth of the water, and way of coming into them. He understood foreign affairs so well, that the ambassadors who were sent into England, published very extraordinary things of him in all the courts of Europe. He had great quickness of apprehension, but being distrustful of his memory, he took notes of every thing he heard (that was considerable) in greek characters, that those about him might not understand what he wrote, which he afterwards copied out fair in the journal that he kept. His virtues were wonderful: when he was made to believe that his uncle was guilty of conspiring the death of the other counsellors, he upon that abandoned him.

Barnaby Fitz-Patrick was his favourite; and when he sent him to travel, he wrote oft to him to keep good company, to avoid excess and luxury, and to improve himself in those things that might

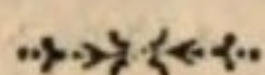


render him capable of employment at his return. He was afterwards made Lord of Upper Ossory in Ireland, by Queen Elizabeth, and answered the hopes this excellent King had of him. He was very merciful in his nature, which appeared in his unwillingness to sign the warrant for burning the maid of Kent. He took great care to have his debts well paid, reckoning that a prince who breaks his faith, and loses his credit, has thrown up that which he can never recover, and made himself liable to perpetual distrust, and extreme contempt. He took special care of the petitions that were given him by poor and oppressed people. But his great zeal for religion crowned all the rest — it was not an angry heat about it that actuated him, but it was a true tenderness of conscience, founded on the love of God and his neighbour. These extraordinary qualities, set off with great sweetness and affability, made him universally beloved by his people.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD IV.

BY HUME.

All the English historians dwell with pleasure on the excellencies of this young prince, whom the flattering promises of hope, joined to many real virtues, had made an object of the most tender affections of the public. He possessed mildness of disposition, application to study and business,

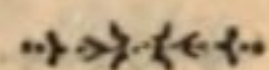


a capacity to learn and judge, and an attachment to equity and justice. He seems only to have contracted, from his education, and from the age in which he lived, too much of a narrow prepossession in matters of religion, which made him incline somewhat to bigotry and persecution. But as the bigotry of Protestants, less governed by priests, lies under more restraints than that of Catholics, the effects of this malignant quality were the less to be apprehended, if a longer life had been granted to young Edward.

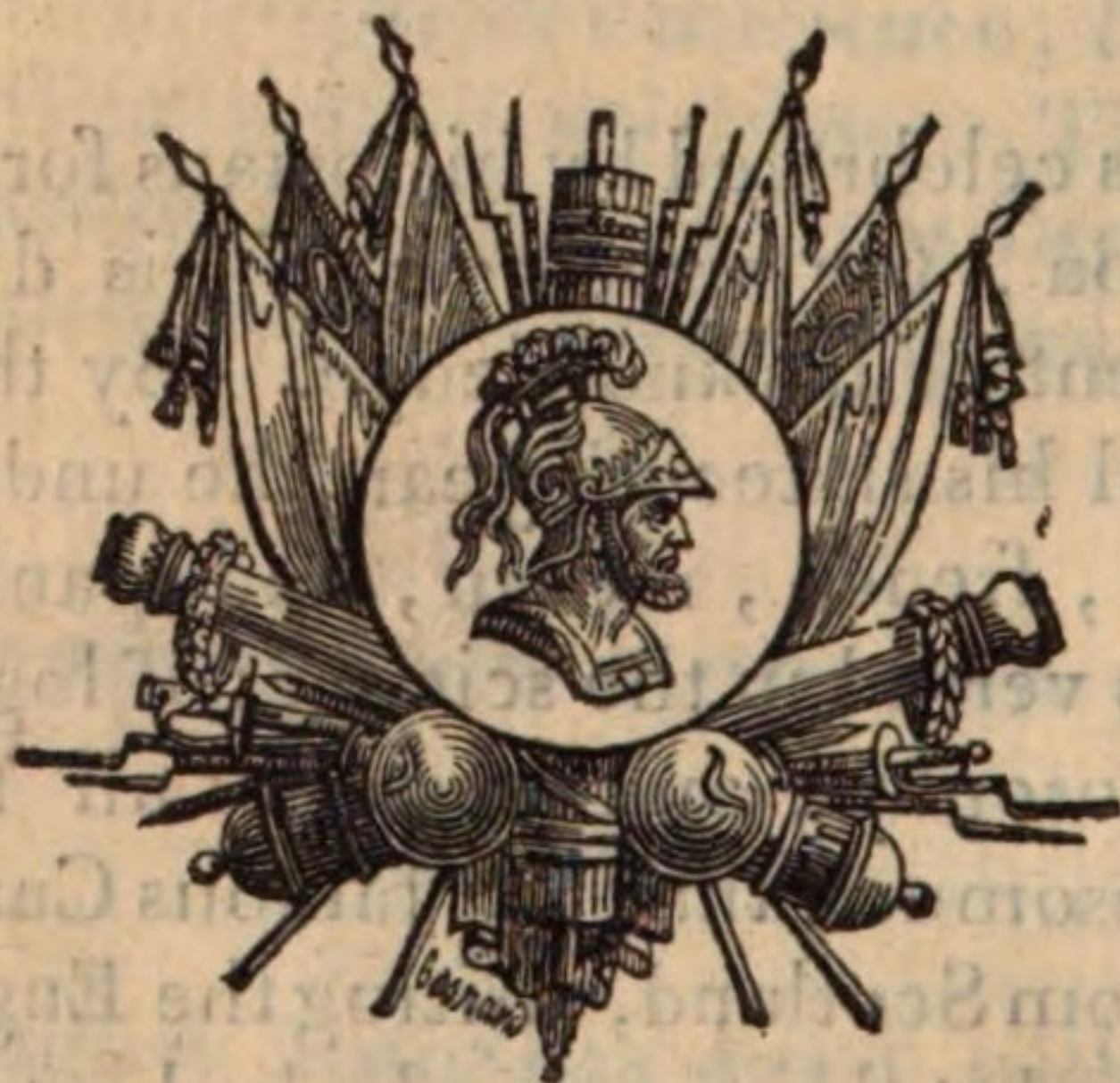
CHARACTER OF EDWARD VI.

BY SMOLLETT.

Edward is celebrated by historians for the beauty of his person, the sweetness of his disposition, and the extent of his knowledge. By that time he had attained his sixteenth year, he understood the greek, latin, french, italian, and spanish languages; he was versed in the sciences of logic, music, natural philosophy, and master of all theological disputes; insomuch that the famous Cardanus, in his return from Scotland, visiting the English court, was astonished at the progress he had made in learning; and afterwards extolled him in his works as a prodigy of nature. Notwithstanding these encomiums, he seems to have had an ingredient of bigotry in his disposition, that would have rendered him very troublesome to those of tender



consciences, who might have happened to differ with him in religious principles; nor can we reconcile either to his boasted humanity or penetration, his consenting to the death of his uncle, who had served him faithfully; unless we suppose he wanted resolution to withstand the importunities of his ministers, and was deficient in that vigour of mind, which often exists independent of learning and culture.



Hume, David, 1711-1776 / Hume, David, / Smollett, Tobias George,

Characters from David Hume with the life of Hume [written by himself
intituled: my own life, character of Alfred the great of William, the
conqueror, of William Rufus, of Henry I, of Stephen, ...]

Paris 1804

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